

DRAFT MINUTES

Board of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Holiday Inn of Harrisonburg, Harrisonburg, Virginia
August 24, 2006

The meeting convened at 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 24, 2006, in the Jefferson/Madison Room of the Holiday Inn of Harrisonburg at 1400 East Market Street in Harrisonburg, Virginia. President Holland requested a moment of silence and then called the meeting to order. The Board Secretary called the roll:

PRESENT

L. Bruce Holland
Paul W. Rogers, Jr.
Wanda G. McDowell
Andrea Lohr
Edward S. Fleming
Gregory J. Galligan
John D. Hardesty, Jr.
Eddie N. Moore, Jr.
Brian Calhoun

DISTRICT

2ND
3rd
5th
6th
7th
8
10
President of Virginia State University
Representing Dr. Charles Steger, President
Virginia Tech

ABSENT

Stephen Wolfe
T. M. Hardison
C. C. Clark, Jr.
Melvin E. Murphy

1st
4th
9th
11th

STAFF PRESENT

J. Carlton Courter, III, Commissioner
Donald G. Blankenship, Deputy Commissioner
Saba Shami, Chief Deputy Commissioner
Roy E. Seward, Board Secretary

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the May 18, 2006 meeting were approved as presented.

REPORT FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Mr. Galligan reported on flooding in the Alexandria area which has caused some people to be displaced. He added that FEMA and the Small Business Administration will be offering loans for individuals who have been affected by the flooding. He noted that donations were being received to help those impacted by the flooding.

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Mr. Calhoun reported that Dr. Mark McCann has been appointed as Associate Dean and Director of Cooperative Extension. He mentioned that Dr. Karen Byrd has been hired as the Associate Director for Family and Consumer Sciences and Mr. Ray Alley joined the administrative team on July 5, 2006 as Director of Field Operations. He advised that Cooperative Extension expects to advertise 20+ extension agent positions in September as a result of a critical staffing initiative that was funded this year. He noted that classes at Virginia Tech have begun.

Mr. Hardesty thanked Ms. Lohr for hosting the Board meeting and tour this year. He reported that production will be down for some commodities. He noted that the dry weather has impacted crops and pastures. He mentioned that a national fruit processing plant, which has been an apple processing plant for over a 100 years in Winchester, was sold to one of the employees and a group of other investors.

Mr. Fleming reported that the conditions of winter wheat and barley are good but the hay crop is not good. He noted that dry weather is impacting crops. He advised that a new extension agent for Goochland and Powhatan has been appointed.

Mr. Rogers reported that the peanut crop this year will be smaller than last year's. He noted that more reductions are expected next year. He also emphasized the impact of dry weather on agriculture in his area.

Ms. Lohr welcomed the Board to the Shenandoah Valley and indicated that she was pleased to host the Board members, staff and guests. She reported that the area has not had any rain in six weeks and that the entire district is very dry. She added that those persons raising produce in the area are reporting problems with the dry weather and that conditions are becoming critical.

Mr. Holland reported that rain has been spotty on the Eastern Shore with precipitation ranging from one inch to 10 inches in some places. He indicated that this year's corn crop had the potential for being the largest ever, but that the dry weather has reduced that potential. He added that the corn crop is still going to be good. He mentioned that investors from the neighboring state in Maryland will be coming to the Eastern Shore to discuss building a two-million-gallons-per-year ethanol plant.

Ms. McDowell reported that Southside Virginia was dry, adding that the tobacco crops are not good. She pointed out that the rising cost of fuel is creating serious problems for farmers. She noted that because of the high energy costs many farmers have decided to delay use of their irrigation equipment. She reported that the price of cattle continues to be stable.

Mr. Moore reported that Virginia State University began classes on August 21, 2006. He also reported that he is now the chair of the Council of 1890 Colleges and Universities.

He noted that the Secretary of Agriculture is scheduled to meet with Mr. Moore at Virginia State. on September 5. He also reported that the University has added a new terminal degree to its program. In closing, he thanked the Board members for their letters of card and condolences.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Courter presented a report on the following:

- *Thanks to Hosts - Andrea and Matt Lohr
- *Personnel Changes
- *New Policy Office Structure
- *Implementation of Apple, Cotton and Horse Industry Checkoffs
- *Virginia Agricultural Sales to Cuba
- *Virginia Wheat Exports to Brazil
- *Update - Specialty Crop Block Grant Program
- *Virginia Grown Promotion
- *Virginia Farmers Market Week
- *Agri-Tourism Limited Liability Law
- *Virginia Food to Schools
- *August 29th Public Hearing on Retail Food Regulation
- *Plans for NASDA Annual Meeting (September 15-20, 2006)
- *Energy Virginia Conference (October 17-18, 2006)
- *Virginia Agriculture Summit (October 19-20, 2006)
- *Use of Document Scanning in Division of Consumer Protection
- *eGovernment Conversion Initiative
- *Attorney General's Government & Regulatory Reform Task Force

ANIMAL RECORDS REPORTING AND INSPECTIONS

Commissioner Courter noted that Donald Marro, who was scheduled to present to the Board a report on "Animal Records Report and Inspections", communicated earlier in the week that he wished to delay his presentation until the December 7 board meeting. (A copy of Mr. Marro's statement was included in the Board folders.)

VDACS BUDGET UPDATE

Deputy Commissioner Don Blankenship presented the Board with an update on the VDACS budget for the 2006-2007 biennium.

NEW POLICY OFFICE STRUCTURE

Mr. Blankenship briefed the Board on the new structure of the Office of Policy, Planning and Research.

MR. WOLFE'S EMAIL

President Holland read to the Board an email from Board Member Steve Wolfe who recognized in this communication the work of Andy Alvarez, Director of the Division of Consumer Protection, in assisting consumers in Mr. Wolfe's congressional district.

PLANS FOR BOARD PICNIC AND TOUR

Ms. Lohr reported on plans for the Board picnic at the Lohr family farm that evening and the plans for the Board tour the next day.

RECOGNITION OF JASEN EIGE

Mr. Holland recognized Jasen Eige, the Senior Assistant Attorney General, who is assigned by the Attorney General to serve as counsel to the Board and VDACS.

VIRGINIA AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS REPORT

Kevin Barnes, Director, Virginia Agricultural Statistics Service, briefed the Board on production reports, releases, and studies made by his office.

NEW BUSINESS

President Holland reported that Secretary Robert Bloxom sends his regrets for not being able to attend the Board meeting because of the Governor's Cabinet meeting.

Commissioner Courter provided information to the Board in response to a letter from Old Dominion Grain regarding grain inspection services provided by VDACS. The Commissioner and Tom Sleight, Director of Marketing, together reviewed with the Board the Department's on-going efforts to attract new persons to be licensed inspectors.

Mr. Galligan initiated a discussion of what can be done to make Board members more accessible to the persons living in their congressional districts. One idea was to create an electronic bulletin board where the public could post questions/ comments. Mr. Galligan asked that the Board be given some options to consider at a future meeting and suggested that each Board member be given the opportunity to decide whether he or she is interested in being more accessible to the public. During the discussion of communications with the public, Mr. Moore suggested that Mr. Eige brief the Board at a future meeting regarding the role of the individual Board

members versus the role of the Board as a group. Mr. Eige agreed to do this at a future meeting.

Ms. McDowell reported that she had received a letter from a person who opposes the use of gas chambers in euthanizing animals. Dr. Richard Wilkes, State

Veterinarian and Director of the Division of Animal and Food Industry Services, briefed the Board on the issues relating to the use of gas chambers, noting that the American Veterinary Medical Association continues to recognize it as an acceptable form of euthanasia for pounds and shelters.

PLANS FOR FUTURE BOARD MEETINGS

Mr. Seward asked the Board to reserve the following dates for Board meetings in Richmond:

December 7, 2006 - Richmond
March 22, 2007 - Richmond

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

President Holland asked for public comments but no one came forward to speak to the Board.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

L. Bruce Holland, Board President

Roy Seward, Board Secretary